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ABSTRACT

The locus of control orientations and value priorities of 289 adult learners (115 males and 174 females) engaged in professional continuing education programs within schools of business and education were assessed by means of the Rotter Internal-External Scale and the Rokeach Value Survey. Two-way analyses of variance indicated that males across both schools were more internally oriented than females. The most important values for business and education professionals were nearly identical except that business people overall gave greater priority to "ambitious," while educators ranked "helpful" as more important. Further analysis indicated that business professionals in non-MBA programs valued "a sense of accomplishment" most, while secondary school educators valued it least. Data are presented in 5 tables and 21 references are included. (Author/KM)

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Locus of Control and Values of Adult Learners in
Continuing Professional Education Programs
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ABSTRACT

The locus of control orientations and value priorities of adult learners engaged in professional continuing education programs within schools of Business and Education were assessed by means of the Rotter I-E Scale and Rokeach Value Survey. Two-way analyses of variance indicated that males across both schools were more internally oriented than females. The most important values for business and education professionals were nearly identical except that business people overall gave greater priority to "Ambitious" while educators ranked "Helpful" as more important. Further analysis indicated that business professionals in non-MBA programs valued "A Sense of Accomplishment" most while secondary school educators valued it least.

The idea that individuals seek to guide their own careers and fulfill their potentialities through continuing professional learning has been reported by Houle (1980) and Stern (1982). Furthermore, the distinction between "professionalism" and "professionalization" suggest a dynamic lifelong educational process of becoming more knowledgeable in one's chosen career. The notion that a profession is a fixed entity or a static closed system of thought in which all learning can be achieved at once is rejected in favor of a more dynamic view that is open to the emergent needs of society (Houle, 1980).

One of the major providers for continuing professional education is the professional school within a university setting. In some of these schools the faculty may have different perspectives regarding their instructional role. For example, some believe that their major efforts should be aimed solely at full-time pre-service students and not with the continuing educational needs of adult learners. However, with the decline in the birth rate as well as the graying of America, professional schools can no longer concentrate solely on youth-centered instructional programs. They will need instead to take into account the continuing education of professional practitioners who seek to enhance their competencies. However, this also presents challenges. The characteristics and learning styles of adults who use the university for continuing professional education tend to differ significantly from pre-service youths (Cross,

1976; Linder et al., 1985). In addition, there are reported differences between adult learners regarding self-reliant behaviors and value orientations (Linder et al., 1987).

Other studies in adult development and education find that as age increases there is a change in perceived self-reliance as well as values (Levinson, 1978; Gould, 1978; Knoop, 1981; Linder et al., 1987). There is also evidence that males tend to have more self-reliant perceptions than females (Strickland & Haley, 1980).

Social learning theory (Rotter, 1966, 1975; Phares, 1976; Bandura, 1977; Lefcourt, 1982, 1983,) is used to describe and explain Locus of Control (LOC) and self-reliant behaviors. This theoretical construct stresses the idea that behaviors are determined simultaneously by the variables of expectancy and reinforcement value. Internal LOC refers to the belief that the occurrence of reinforcements are contingent upon one's own ability and/or effort while an external LOC refers to the belief that fate, luck, chance, or powerful others determine outcomes.

Research by Rokeach (1973, 1979) demonstrated that there are developmental changes in values as people age. He described two sets of values: Terminal or ends-oriented values and Instrumental or means-oriented values. Terminal values refer to goals that are worth striving for (e.g., "Self-Respect") and Instrumental values refer to conceptions of desirable modes of behavior that help to attain valued outcomes (e.g., "Honest" and "Responsible").

The systematic study of the LOC orientations and values of adult learners in higher education and the relationships that exist between these constructs was recently begun by Linder et al.(1985, 1986, 1987). The present study extends the earlier work by examining the LOC orientations and values of adults enrolled in professional continuing education programs.

Specifically, the following research questions guided this study:

1. What are the LOC orientations of professional adult learners in Schools of Business and Education?
2. Do males and females within these schools have different LOC orientations?
3. What are the value priorities of professional adult learners within Schools of Business and Education?
4. Do males and females within the two professional schools hold different value priorities?

METHOD

Subjects were adult learners enrolled in graduate Business and Education programs at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond during the 1983-1986 academic years. They ranged in age from 21 to over 40. There were 133 subjects (86 males, 47 females) from the Business School and 156 subjects (29 males, 127 females) from the School of Education for a total sample size of 289.

Rotter's (1966) Internal-External Scale was used to assess subjects' LOC orientation. It consists of 23 question

pairs within a forced-choice format plus six filler questions. The I-E Scale has been judged appropriate for use with college educated adult subjects (Lefcourt, 1981).

Rokeach's (1973) Value Survey was the second instrument used to assess subjects' value priorities. It consists of 18 alphabetically listed terminal and instrumental values on separate pages. Subjects rank order each list of values according to the relative importance of each value to themselves.

A three-part survey comprising demographic data plus the two instruments was given to faculty to distribute to their classes. Part I asked information concerning subjects' age, sex, marital status, work, and academic major. Part II consisted of Rotter's I-E Scale and Part III included Rokeach's Value Survey (Form D). Subjects completed the questionnaires and returned them via self-addressed envelopes. A 54% and 50% rate of return was obtained from the Schools of Business and Education respectively.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 presents the mean LOC scores for males and females in the Schools of Business and Education.

Insert Table 1 about here

In most studies a mean LOC score below 8.5 is considered a relatively internal orientation on the I-E Scale that ranges from a score of 0 to 23 (Lefcourt, 1982). The data

in Table 1 indicated by means of a two-way analysis of variance that males were significantly more internally oriented than females across schools [$F(1,279)=10.34$; $p = .0002$]. This result is consistent with McNeill and Jacobs (1980) and Strickland and Haley (1980). However, according to Dyal (1984) cultural factors and sample characteristics should be considered before generalizing such results. It should be noted that women in the School of Education obtained a more internal LOC mean score than women in the School of Business. While this result was not significant it may indicate that teachers perceive they have more control over their immediate work environment than businesswomen.

Terminal Values

The rankings of Terminal values by sex and program/level of teaching for the Schools of Business and Education are presented in Tables 2 and 3 respectively.

Insert Table 2 about here

The four most highly ranked Terminal values in the School of Business were "Self-Respect," "Happiness," "Freedom" and "Family Security." These four values were similarly ranked in the School of Education.

Insert Table 3 about here

There were statistically significant school effects for the values "Happiness" [$F(1,279) = 7.42; p = .007$] and "Family Security" [$F(1,279) = 7.45; p = .007$]. Business professionals ranked "Happiness" second while educators ranked it fourth. Educators ranked "Family Security" first while business people ranked it fourth. There was a program/teaching level effect nested within schools for the value "A Sense of Accomplishment." Business professionals enrolled in the MBA program ranked this value fifth and non-MBA people ranked it second. Educators at the Elementary level ranked "A Sense of Accomplishment" eighth while teachers at the Secondary level ranked it tenth. Educators in the "Other" category which included administrators, counselors, special resource teachers, physical and adult educators ranked this value fifth.

There were significant sex effects for the values "Happiness" [$F(1,279) = 5.42; p = .02$], "A Sense of Accomplishment" [$F(1,279) = 8.79; p = .003$], "Wisdom" [$F(1,279) = 12.87; p = .0004$] and "True Friendship" [$F(1,279) = 3.62; p = .05$]. Females across both schools ranked "Happiness" and "True Friendship" more highly than did males. On the other hand, males across both schools ranked "A Sense of Accomplishment" and "Wisdom" more highly than did females.

Instrumental Values

Table 4 displays the rankings of Instrumental values in the School of Business.

Insert Table 4 about here

The values given the highest priority by business professionals were "Honest," "Responsible," "Capable" and "Ambitious." The value priorities of educators were similar except that they ranked "Loving" third while business professionals ranked it sixth. Females, however, across both schools gave greater priority to "Loving" than did males [$F(1,279) = 4.67$; $p = .03$].

Insert Table 5 about here

There were statistically significant school effects for the values "Ambitious" [$F(1,279) = 5.88$; $p = .02$], and "Helpful" [$F(1,279) = 9.78$; $p = .002$]. Business people gave greater priority to "Ambitious" while educators ranked "Helpful" as more important.

CONCLUSION

The locus of control orientation of professionals in the present study reflect a strong self-reliance. Men and women, but especially the men, perceive that they obtain valued reinforcements from their environment because of what they do and not because of the actions of others. Desirable worthy goals (Terminal values) are similar for the professionals in this study although they differ somewhat in the perceived means (Instrumental values) for getting

there. According to Houle (in Stern, 1982) there should be more collaboration between the professional schools within the university because most of the characteristics of professionalization are common to all occupations engaged in the continuing professional education process. Further research on adult learners in other professional schools (e.g., Medicine , Arts and Sciences) is needed.

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Table 1. Mean Locus of Control by Sex and School

<u>School of Bus</u>			<u>School of Ed</u>		
Male / Female			Male / Female		
N =	86	47	29	127	
M =	7.69	9.43	7.79	8.98	

Table 2. Rankings of Terminal Values by Sex and Program for Professionals Who are Students in School of Business

Value	All	Sex		Program		MBA		Non-MBA	
		M	F	MBA	Non MBA	M	F	M	F
Self-Respect	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1
Happiness	2	5	2	3	3	4	2	3	2
Freedom	3	2	3	2	4	2	3	5	4
Family Security	4	3	4	4	6	3	4	4	8
Sense of Accomplishment	5	4	5	5	2	5	7	2	3
Wisdom	6	6	8	7	5	6	9	1	9
Mature Love	7	7	7	6	8	8	6	8	5
True Friendship	8	9	6	8	7	9	5	7	6
Inner Harmony	9	8	9	9	9	7	11	10	7
A Comfortable Life	10	10	11	10	10	10	8	9	13
Salvation	11	11	10	11	11	12	10	11	10
A World of Peace	12	13	12	13	12	13	12	12	11
An Exciting Life	13	12	14	12	15	11	14	13*	16
Social Recognition	14	14	17	14	17*	14	16*	17	17
National Security	15	15	16	15	13	15	16*	16	12
Pleasure	16	16	15	16	14	16	15	13*	15
Equality	17	18	13	17	16	17	13	18	14
A World of Beauty	18	17	18	18	17*	18	18	15	18
Sample Size	133	86	47	98	35	68	30	18	17

Table 3. Rankings of Terminal Values by Sex and Teaching Level for Professionals Who are Students in School of Education

Value	All	Sex		Teaching Level			Elem		Secon		Other	
		M	F	El	Sec	Othr	M	F	M	F	M	F
Family Security	1	1	2	1	2	2	5	1	2	1*	2	2
Self-Respect	2	2	1	2	1	1	1*	2	1	1*	5	1
Freedom	3	4	3	3	3	4	4	5	3	3	8	4
Happiness	4	7	4	5	4	3	9*	3	6	4	7	3
Inner Harmony	5	6	5	4	7	6	7	4	5	8	12	5
True Friendship	6	10	6	9	5*	7	9*	6	8	5	9	7
Sense of Accomplishment	7	3	9	8	10	5	6	9	4	10	1	8
Wisdom	8	5	8	6	5*	10	1*	7*	7	6	3	11
A World of Peace	9	12	7	10	9	8	8	11	11	9	13	6
Mature Love	10	8	10	11	8	9	12	12	10	7	6	9
A Comfortable Life	11	9	13	12	12	11	17	10	9	13	4	12
Salvation	12	11	12	7	11	15	3	7*	14	11	10	16*
Equality	13	14	11	13	13	12	11	13	12	12	14	10
National Security	14	15	14	14	14	14	13	14	15	14	15*	14
An Exciting Life	15	13	15	15	15	13	14*	16	13	16	11	13
A World of Beauty	16	18	16	16	16	17	16	17	17	15	18	15
Pleasure	17	16	17	17	17	18	18	15	16	17	17	18
Social Recognition	18	17	18	18	18	16	14*	18	18	18	15*	16*
Sample Size	156	29	127	32	65	59	4	28	15	50	10	49

Table 4. Rankings of Instrumental Values by Sex and Program for Professionals Who are Students in School of Business

Value	All	Sex		Program		MBA		Non-MBA	
		M	F	MBA	Non MBA	M	F	M	F
Honest	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Responsible	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Capable	3	4	5	3	3	4	5	4	3
Ambitious	4	3	7	4	6	3	7	5	9*
Independent	5	5	3	5	4	5	3	3	9*
Loving	6	6	4	6	5	8	4	6	5*
Intellectual	7	7	6	7	9	7	6	11	5*
Broadminded	8	9	8	8	10	9	9	12	7
Courageous	9	10	11	11	7	11	12	7	4
Cheerful	10	11	10	10	11	12	8	10	12
Logical	11	8	15	9	14	6	14	13	15
Self-Controlled	12	12	13	13	12	13	13	8	13
Forgiving	13	14	9	15	8	15	10	9	8
Helpful	14	15	12	14	13	14	11	14	11
Imaginative	15	13	14	12	15	10	15	17	14
Polite	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	15	16
Clean	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	16	17
Obedient	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18
Sample Size	133	86	47	98	35	68	30	18	17

Table 5. Rankings of Instrumental Values by Sex and Teaching Level for Professionals Who are Students in School of Education

Value	All	Sex		Teaching Level			Elem		Secon		Other	
		M	F	El	Sec	Othr	M	F	M	F	M	F
Honest	1	1*	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Responsible	2	1*	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	3
Loving	3	8	3	3	4	3	10	3	6	4	9	2
Capable	4	4	5	4	6	4	1	5	8	5	3	4
Independent	5	10	4	6	3	5	8	6	9	3	12	5
Helpful	6	5	6	5	7	6	3*	4	4	8	11	6
Broadminded	7	3	8	11	5	8	7	11*	3	6	4	11
Intellectual	8	9	7	7	8	9	3*	8*	12	7	7	10
Self-Controlled	9	6*	10	8	9	10	11	7	7	10	5	12
Forgiving	10	13	9	10	10	7	13*	8*	14	9	6	7
Ambitious	11	11	11	9	12	12	5	10	10	13	13*	9
Logical	12	6*	14	15	11	14	9	15	5	11	10	14
Cheerful	13	15	12	13	15	11	15	11*	16	15	15	8
Courageous	14	12	13	14	13	13	13*	14	11	14	13*	13
Polite	15	14	15	12	14	15	12	13	13	12	8	16
Imaginative	16	16	16	17	16	16	16	17	15	16	16	15
Clean	17	18	17	16	17	17	18	16	18	17	17	17
Obedient	18	17	18	18	18	18	17	18	17	18	18	18
Sample Size	156	29	127	32	65	59	4	28	15	50	10	49